

GERM CELL TUMOURS. Editors KD Bagshawe, ES Newlands and RHJ Begent. Clinics in Oncology, Vol 2, No 1. (Pp vii + 1-284. Illustrated. £11.75). London, Philadelphia, Toronto: Saunders, 1983.

GERM Cell Tumour is the modern term for a malignant tumour of the testis or ovary. It also includes some tumours that arise in extra-gonadal sites. This volume covers the epidemiology, pathology, diagnosis and clinical management of germ cell tumours. Inevitably the work is a multi-author presentation but the experience of three of the authors from the Department of Oncology at Charing Cross Hospital is evident throughout.

The treatment of germ cell tumours is one of the most rapidly advancing fields in clinical oncology and current developments in this area are comprehensively discussed. Precise staging of these lesions is essential prior to treatment and the chapter on Imaging is one of the best sections in the book. Again monitoring the progress of germ cell tumours often depends on the presence of tumour markers and reference is made to the importance of these in several chapters. The volume is somewhat expensive but the glossy format presumably accounts for this. It is an important new book in this field. WSL

BILIARY TRACT DISORDERS. Edited by Meinhard Classen and Hans W Schreiber. Clinics in Gastroenterology, Vol 12, No 1. (Pp vii + 1-322. Illustrated. £11.75). London, Philadelphia, Toronto: Saunders, 1983.

TEN years have elapsed since this topic was last covered in this series and its reappearance is timely in view of the many advances which have occurred over this time. The book is essentially a collection of 12 self-contained review articles each by contributors recognised for their expertise in the area. The first chapter reviews fundamental matters of secretion, composition and flow of bile while in the second Professor Bouchier reviews all contemporary work and proposals concerning the biochemistry of gall stone formation. It is perhaps a reflection of the state of this art that many of these proposals appear contradictory and the reader is grateful for his short summary. Many of the more practical changes in the approach to biliary tract disease have occurred in diagnostic methods and the next 3 chapters review the place of radiology in diagnosis. The advances in ultrasonography, ERCP and CT scanning are described and the usefulness and limitations of each method is analysed with many good illustrations. Perhaps the most lucid section of the book is that by Professor Dowling on medical management of cholelithiasis. In this he considers the indications, efficacy, administration, pharmacokinetics and bioavailability, complications and economics of therapy. The following 3 chapters deal with surgical management of cholelithiasis and cholecystitis and perhaps make up the weakest section of the book. There is some repetition of material which could have been avoided by further editing and there is also some disagreement and confusion for the reader on the management of the complication of retained stones after surgery. In the chapter on post-surgical syndromes organic disease is said to be found in only 50% of cases but this is given most of the coverage. For those of us who have to deal with the other 50% the brief and superficial outline is disappointing.

This book provides a comprehensive and up-to-date survey of biliary tract disease. It will be useful not only to those specialists, gastroenterologists and surgeons who deal in this area but to many of us with more general interests for whom biliary tract disease remains a considerable proportion of our work.

JRH

THE ROLE OF THE LABORATORY IN RHEUMATOLOGY. Edited by MS Jeffery and W Carson Dick. Clinics in Rheumatic Diseases. (Pp 288. Illustrated. £11.75). London, Philadelphia, Toronto: Saunders.

THIS issue of this important series is the work of 21 British and international contributors. It covers all aspects of laboratory investigation of the rheumatic patient and a number of the articles are a combined work of a laboratory worker and clinician. In that respect, there is an important contribution of practical detail which reflects the attitude of the laboratory staff. The illustrations in the section on diagnostic pathology are clear and add greatly to the text and the sections on HLA antigens, aspects of immunology and joint fluid examination are particularly to be commended.

This is a very useful update of the role of the laboratory in rheumatology. It can be fully recommended to rheumatologists, general physicians and students alike. Considering the high quality of paper, printing and binding, it is excellent value at the price.

MWJB